



Species



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Specialist Group exchange

Protecting plants



Fungi: the orphans of Rio

Save Our Species

Species 52

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Species is the magazine of the IUCN Species Programme and the IUCN Species Survival Commission. Commission members, in addition to providing leadership for conservation efforts for specific plant and animal groups, contribute to technical and scientific counsel to biodiversity conservation projects throughout the world. They provide advice to governments, international conventions, and conservation organizations.

Team Species Dena Cator, Lynne Labanne, Kathryn Pintus, and Rachel Roberts

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Cover Franklin's Bumble Bee (*Bombus franklini*) © Pete Schroeder

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Mountain Gorilla (*Gorilla beringei beringei*). © IUCN Gérard Collin

Specialist Group exchange

African Elephant SG

Online database goes live

The AfESG members came together for their seventh members' meeting in November 2009 in Nairobi, Kenya. The meeting brought together members to discuss recent research, ongoing conservation concerns, and emerging issues. The main themes covered by the meeting were: illegal killing and trade; planning for elephant conservation; human-elephant conflict; securing and managing population data; climate change and payments for ecosystem services; and multiple species of the African Elephant. A number of additional sessions dealt with internal AfESG matters. A summary of the meeting can be found online [here](#). The meeting was supported by the USFWS African Elephant Conservation Fund, SWAN International, and WWF-International.

The new online African and Asian Elephant Database is available for beta testing (www.elephantdatabase.org). This server-based, spatially enabled database provides a way to interact with data from the African Elephant Status Reports, submit new survey reports, and download and request population and range data. This is being run as an open source project, and a community of developers will be able to make further refinements as users provide feedback.

The AfESG continues to work closely with range States and the CITES MIKE (Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants) programme to provide technical support to a number of different planning processes. AfESG members have assisted with national planning processes in Mozambique, Tanzania and Kenya over the last year, and the AfESG Secretariat has continued to aid the CITES MIKE programme in its provision of support to the African Elephant range States through the African Elephant Meetings, the next of which will be held in Nairobi in November 2010. In collaboration with the CITES MIKE programme, the AfESG has also undertaken a study into the trade in elephant meat in the Central African sub-region. The results of this study will be available in early 2011.

Diane Skinner

Programme Officer, African Elephant Specialist Group

African Rhino SG

National Black Rhino Plans revised

The joint report submitted by the IUCN SSC African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups and TRAFFIC, found [here](#), was included as part of the CITES Secretariat's report to COP 15, and was well received by CITES Parties. A number of recommendations in the report later became CITES Decisions, and several AfRSG members also participated in a working group to revise the CITES Rhino Resolution 9.14 (rev). For more details, see the AfRSG Chair's report in *Pachyderm 47*.

The AfRSG Scientific Officer and other AfRSG members continue to work closely with range States to help them develop and revise their National Rhino Plans. South Africa's revised Black Rhino Plan for the period 2010–2020 has been submitted and is nearing the final stages of getting official approval. Recently, the Tanzanian Black

Rhino Plan for the next five years was also reworked following a stakeholders' workshop held in Arusha, and it is hoped that the revised plan will soon be signed by the Minister. Botswana will be holding a workshop in October to revise its National Rhino Plan.

The [IUCN Guidelines for the *in situ* Re-introduction and Translocation of African and Asian Rhinoceros](#) continues to be a useful document, and provides recommended best practices which are being referenced in National Plans.

In April, a very useful meeting was held in Namibia to help develop a National Rhino and Elephant Security Plan; a number of AfRSG members attended and gave background presentations. The AfRSG Scientific Officer also recently gave a presentation as part of the launch of a WWF rhino campaign, with the escalation in rhino poaching in South Africa being highlighted as a particular concern.

The AfRSG Scientific Officer has been assisting the SADC Rhino and Elephant Security Group/Interpol sub-regional Environmental Crime Working Group to develop an Arguments in Aggravation of Sentence template for use in rhino-crime related court cases.

Richard Emslie

Scientific Officer, African Rhino Specialist Group

Asian Wild Cattle SG

Asian 'Unicorn' sighted for first time in over 10 years

For the first time in more than a decade, there has been a confirmed sighting of one of the rarest and most enigmatic animals in the world, the Saola (*Pseudoryx nghetinhensis*). In late August, villagers from the remote Xaychamphon District in the central province of Bolikhamxay, Laos, captured an adult male Saola, and brought it back to their village. When news of the Saola's capture



African Elephant (*Loxodonta africana*). © K. Pintus